

Message Text

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FROM HOUGHTON AND MACK

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EAID LE

SUBJECT: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

REF: STATE 213888

1. AT THE TIME OF OUR DEPARTURE FROM JOUNIEH, DR MICHEL NASR HAD STILL NOT RETURNED FROM HIS TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES. MACK DID HAVE A DISCUSSION ON SEPTEMBER 2 WITH MRS PHILLIPE KHAZEN OF THE LEBANESE RED CROSS AT HER OFFICE. MRS KHAZEN SAID THAT FOR THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF THE WAR THE ICRC HAD BEEN VERY UNHELPFUL. HOW, HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN A COMPLETE TURNOVER OF ICRC PERSONNEL AND SHE IS GENERALLY SATISFIED WITH THEIR LEVEL OF COOPERATION. MACK ASSURED HER THAT AS THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR TO THE ICRC PROGRAM IN LEBANON, THE USG INTENDED TO SEE THAT THE ICRC DISTRIBUTED ITS AID FAIRLY TO BOTH SIDES AND INVITED HER TO COMMUNICATE WITH US AT ANY TIME THAT SHE FELT HER ORGANIZATION WAS NOT BEING TREATED CORRECTLY. MRS KHAZEN EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THIS ASSURANCE.

2. MRS KHAZEN SAID THAT THE LEBANESE RED CROSS IN JOUNIEH WAS IN THE PROCESS OF EXPANDING AND IMPROVING ITS EFFORTS IN THE NORTHERN PARTS OF THE CHRISTIAN-HELD
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AREA WHERE IT HAD PREVIOUSLY NOT BEEN FUNCTIONING VERY

EFFECTIVELY. SHE SAID THAT THE BOTTLENECKS WERE SHORTAGES OF EQUIPMENT FOR WHICH SUFFICIENT FUNDS ARE NOT AVAILABLE. SHE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED THE JOUNIEH BLOOD BANK WHICH IS OPERATING WITH OUT MODERATE EQUIPMENT. MRS KHAZEN EXPRESSED PRIDE IN THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BLOOD BANK AND THEIR IMAGINATIVE PROGRAM TO RECRUIT DONORS, BUT SHE DESCRIBED IT AS A SHOESTRING OPERATION. THE ONLY OTHER SPECIFIC ITEM WHICH SEEMS TO BE OF SERIOUS CONCERN IS AMBULANCES, OF WHICH ONLY THREE ARE AVAILABLE FOR THE ENTIRE CHRISTIAN-HELD AREA. MRS KHAZEN PROVIDED US WITH DETAILED LISTS OF MEDICAL ITEMS WHICH THE LEBANESE RED CROSS FEELS IT REQUIRES. MACK TOLD HER THAT HE COULD MAKE NO COMMITMENT BUT WOULD DELIVER THE DOCUMENTS TO WASHINGTON FOR THE ATTENTION OF OFFICIALS WHO HAD EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO SEE IF WE COULD BE OF HELP.

3. MRS KHAZEN SAID THERE ARE NO SERIOUS PERSONNEL SHORTAGES, EXCEPT FOR A FEW MD SPECIALISTS. SHE IDENTIFIED A SPECIFIC NEED FOR A NEUROLOGIST. IN GENERAL, SHE SAID, THE LEBANESE DOCTORS WHO LEFT EARLIER ARE BEGINNING TO COME BACK. THE RED CROSS HAS ALREADY CONSIDERED THE PROSPECT OF EPIDEMICS AND IS PLANNING VACCINATION PROGRAMS TO COVER THE ENTIRE CHRISTIAN-HELD AREA.

4. REGARDING NON-MEDICAL RELIEF NEEDS, MRS KHAZEN NOTED THAT THIS IS A NEED WHICH IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE FOR THE DURATION OF THE HOSTILITIES AND FOR AT LEAST TWO YEARS BEYOND UNTIL THE ECONOMY RECOVERED FROM THE WAR. SHE DESCRIBED THE CURRENT FAO FOOD AID AS TOO LIMITED AND RESTRICTIVE IN ITS CONDITIONS, EMPHASIZING THAT THE WAR HAD CREATED NEEDY PEOPLE OTHER THAN REFUGEES. SHE EXPRESSED PARTICULAR CONCERN THAT PROGRAMS SUCH AS THAT OF THE ICRC WOULD STOP THE MOMENT HOSTILITIES CEASED.

5. WHEN WE CALLED ON THE MARONITE PATRIARCH WE INQUIRED ABOUT THE MISSION OF BISHOP ABU JOUDE. THE PATRIARCH SAID THAT ABU JOUDE HAD NOT YET RETURNED. THE PATRIARCH HIMSELF OFFERED TO TELL US ANYTHING WE WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE ABU JOUDE MISSION BUT RESTRICTED HIS COMMENTS TO GENERAL-CONFIDENTIAL

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ZATIONS ABOUT "TERRIBLE NEEDS" IN LEBANON AND A COMPLAINT THAT CARITAS IS NOT DOING NEARLY ENOUGH. IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT MRS KHAZEN WAS RATHER NEGATIVE ON THE SUBJECT OF RELIEF AID BY LEBANESE CHURCH GROUPS AND SAID THEY WERE NO HELP AT ALL TO THE RED CROSS.

6. COMMENT: WE ARE UNABLE TO ASSESS THE ABILITY OF THE LEBANESE RED CROSS TO SERVE AS A PIPELINE FOR EXPANDED

AID. MRS KHAZAN IS A DETERMINED AND SEEMINGLY EFFICIENT PERSON WHO HAS PROBABLY DONE A GOOD JOB WITH LIMITED RESOURCES. THE CAPACITY OF HERSELF AND HER SMALL STAFF TO TAKE ON MORE MANAGERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES IS A QUESTION WHICH WAS BEYOND THE SCOPE OF OUR EXPERTISE AND THE TIME AVAILABLE TO OUR MISSION.
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